

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 091255Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5192

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 520

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF

SUBJ: JORDANIAN-WEST BANK ISSUES

REF: AMMAN 1855

1. AS FOOTNOTE TO AMMAN'S 1855, AND WITH EMBASSY'S FORE-BEARANCE, I MIGHT RELATE TWO COMMENTS MADE TO ME IN AMMAN DURING VISIT THERE MARCH 17-19.

2. INFORMATION MINISTER ABU ODEH, WHO I BELIEVE WAS AT ONE TIME AT LEAST THOUGHT TO BE CLOSE TO PALACE, GAVE AS HIS "PERSONAL VIEW" THAT BEST WAY TO ULTIMATE WEST BANK-JORDANIAN UNION LAY THROUGH PHASE OF SEPARATE WEST BANK ENTITY. ONE HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IMPORTANT FACTS THAT PALESTINIANS NOW FELT THEMSELVES TO BE SEPARATE PEOPLE AND THAT LARGE SEGMENT OF PLO HAD UNEXPECTEDLY MOVED TOWARD ACCEPTANCE OF MODERATE SETTLEMENT. IF JORDAN MOVED TOO DIRECTLY TO TAKE OVER WEST BANK, PALESTINIANS WOULD BE ALIENATED AND OPPORTUNITY TO DRAW MUCH OF PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT INTO SETTLEMENT WOULD BE LOST. PLO WOULD BE RERADICALIZED. IF SOME FORM OF SEPARATE ENTITY ACCEPTED BY JORDAN, FACTS OF GEOGRAPHY, FAMILY CONNECTIONS, ETC., WOULD ULTIMATELY DRAW WEST AND EAST BANKS TOGETHER.

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3. ABDUL MONEM RIFAI VOLUNTEERED COMMENT THAT JORDAN COULD NOT EXPECT WEST BANK TO RETURN UNLESS MORE REPRESENTATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEM DEVELOPED IN JORDAN WITH MORE CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. SITUATION COULD NOT CONTINUE, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE NEWSPAPER COULD BE SNUFFED OUT FOR DISAGREEING WITH GOVERNMENT. I ASKED IF IT WAS FEASIBLE TO MAKE THESE CHANGES AND HE REPLIED THEY MUST BE MADE AND THIS MUST BE GUARANTEED TO WEST BANKERS.

4. RE REFTEL, WE AGREE GENERALLY WITH MASRI'S ASSESSMENT PARAS 3, 4., AND 6. RE PARA 5, WE ARE NOT SO FAR INCLINED BELIEVE RECENT SPATE OF MINOR TERRORIST INCIDENTS NECESSARILY REFLECTS BASIC IMPORVEMENT IN FATAH (OR OTHER PLO) INFRASTRUCTURE. WE RECALL SIMILAR UPSWING YEAR AGO, FOR EXAMPLE. (WE QUESTION ALSO WHETHER TERRORIST ACTS ARE THOSE OF FATAH ITSELF; PFLP SEEMS MORE LIKELY TO EXTENT ACTS ARE NOT LOCALLY INSPIRED.) NEVERTHELESS, IT IS LIKELY PLO HAS BEEN MORE ACTIVE GENERALLY ON WEST BANK, ORGANIZING, ESTABLISHING CONTACTS, ETC., AND THAT IT IS GETTING MORE COOPERATION FROM LOCAL POPULATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 APR 1974
Decapton Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974JERUSA00520
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740081-0197
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740456/aaaabysh.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: AMMAN 1855
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JORDANIAN-WEST BANK ISSUES
TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005